

Message Text

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EUR/WE - EJBEIGEL

EB/OA - MHSTYLES

-----100413Z 119139 /73

R 100222Z FEB 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 030234

STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, UK, FR

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - US-UK AVIATION NEGOTIATIONS--POSSIBLE
CURTAILMENT OR CESSATION OF AIR SERVICES IN NO-AGREEMENT
SITUATION

1. FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS INCLUDING WIDE DIFFERENCES AT
PRESENT BETWEEN US AND UK NEGOTIATING POSITIONS, THERE IS
CONSIDERABLE LIKELIHOOD IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO CONCLUDE
A NEW AGREEMENT WITH UK BY JUNE 22, 1977. PREPARATION FOR
THIS LIKELIHOOD MUST INCLUDE ALL POSSIBILITIES NO-AGREEMENT
SITUATION COULD INTRODUCE, RANGING FROM ARRANGEMENT TO
EXTEND PRESENT AGREEMENT UNTIL NEW ONE IS CONCLUDED TO
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SERIOUS CONFRONTATION AND CURTAILMENT OF AIR SERVICES BE-
TWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

2. FOR LONDON: IN COMING MONTHS DEPT WOULD APPRECIATE
EMBASSY LONDON'S CONTINUING ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY BRITISH
REACTION TO NO -AGREEMENT SITUATION AND OF BRITISH PREFER-
ENCES AS TO POST-JUNE 22 ARRANGEMENTS. DEPT WOULD ALSO

APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S VIEWS/INPUT AS WE GIVE PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION TO OPTIONS NECESSITATED BY WORST-CASE SITUATION, IN WHICH BRITISH REJECT MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS FOR PERIOD FOLLOWING JUNE 22 AND IMPOSE UNILATERAL RESTRICTIONS ON US AIRLINES' OPERATIONS,

THEREBY REQUIRING US RETALIATORY RESPONSE. SPECIFICALLY, DEPT REQUESTS EMBASSY'S INDEPENDENT, REPEAT, INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF BRITISH OFFICIAL AND PUBLIC REACTIONS TO (1) US RETALIATION SOLELY AGAINST BRITISH AIRWAYS' WASHINGTON/NEW YORK CONCORDE FLIGHTS (ASSUMING SUCH FLIGHTS ARE ULTIMATELY APPROVED), AND (2) US RETALIATION AGAINST WASHINGTON AND/OR NEW YORK CONCORDE FLIGHTS AS PART OF MORE GENERAL RETALIATION AGAINST OTHER BRITISH AIRWAYS OPERATIONS. EMBASSY MIGHT CONSIDER ADDRESSING FOLLOWING POINTS AMONG OTHERS IN MAKING THIS EVALUATION:

IN SITUATION REQUIRING US RETALIATION, US WOULD SEEK MINIMIZE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF BRITISH ACTIONS AND ITS OWN ON US AIRLINES AND TRAVELING PUBLIC OF BOTH COUNTRIES. RESTRICTIONS ON OR ELIMINATION OF BRITISH AIRWAYS CONCORDE FLIGHTS WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE MAXIMUM RETALIATORY EFFECT BUT MINIMAL EFFECT ON MARKET SINCE IT IS SERVICE DESIGNED FOR VERY SMALL, ALMOST ELITE MARKET SEGMENT. ON OTHER HAND, WE ARE AWARE OF FACT THAT CONCORDE HAS STRONG SUPPORT AMONG UK GENERAL POPULATION.

3. FOR PARIS: WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COMMENTS EMBASSY MIGHT WISH TO MAKE WITH RESPECT TO FRENCH REACTIONS TO CURTAIL-
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MENT OF BRITISH CONCORDE OPERATIONS.
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